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(54) **ASSISTING CONTACT CENTER AGENTS
AND CUSTOMERS**

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H04M 5/00 (2006.01)

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379/265.01, 265.05, 265.06, 212.01, 211.02,
379/265.03

See application file for complete search history.

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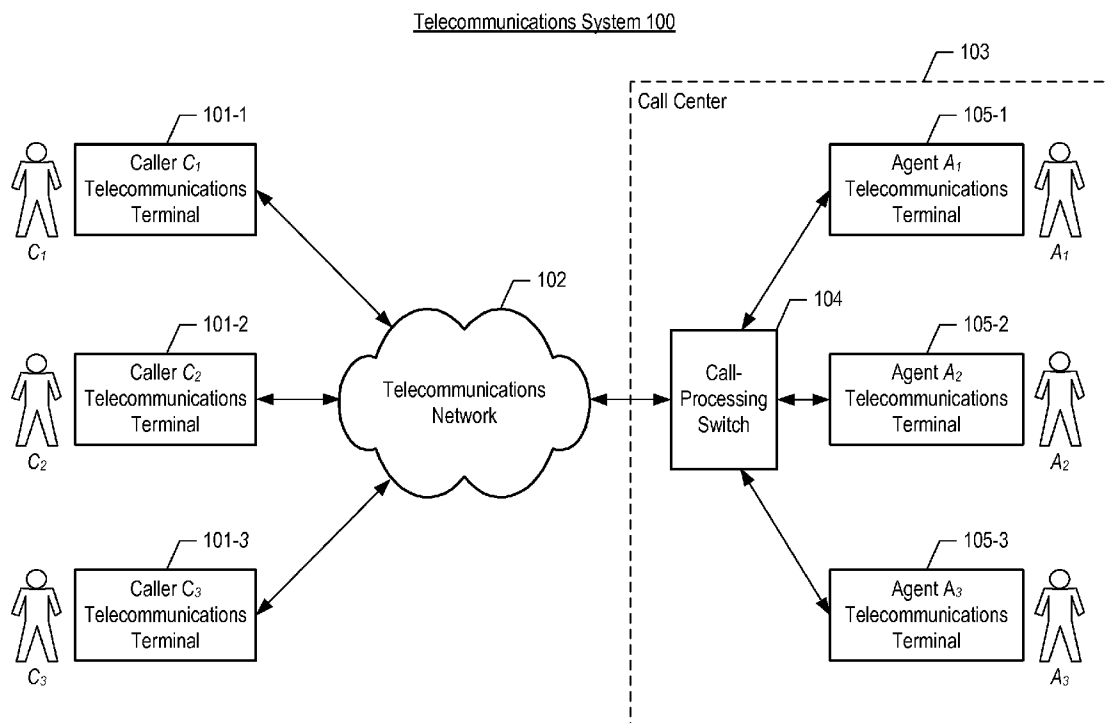
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Primary Examiner — Thjuan K Addy

(57) **ABSTRACT**

A method of receiving a call from a first caller that is request-
ing for assistance with a product. Once the call center receives
the call, a call-processing switch routes the first caller to a first
agent. Once the caller is routed to the first agent, a first
message is transmitted to both the first caller’s terminal and
the first agent’s terminal. After the first message is presented
to the first caller and the first agent, the call-processing switch
will monitor the communications stream for distress. During
monitoring of the communications stream, the call-process-
ing switch will estimate whether a level of distress is present
in the communications stream. If it is estimated by the call-
processing switch that there is distress present in the commu-
nications stream, the call-processing switch will transmit a
second message to the first caller’s terminal and the first
agent’s terminal.

20 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets



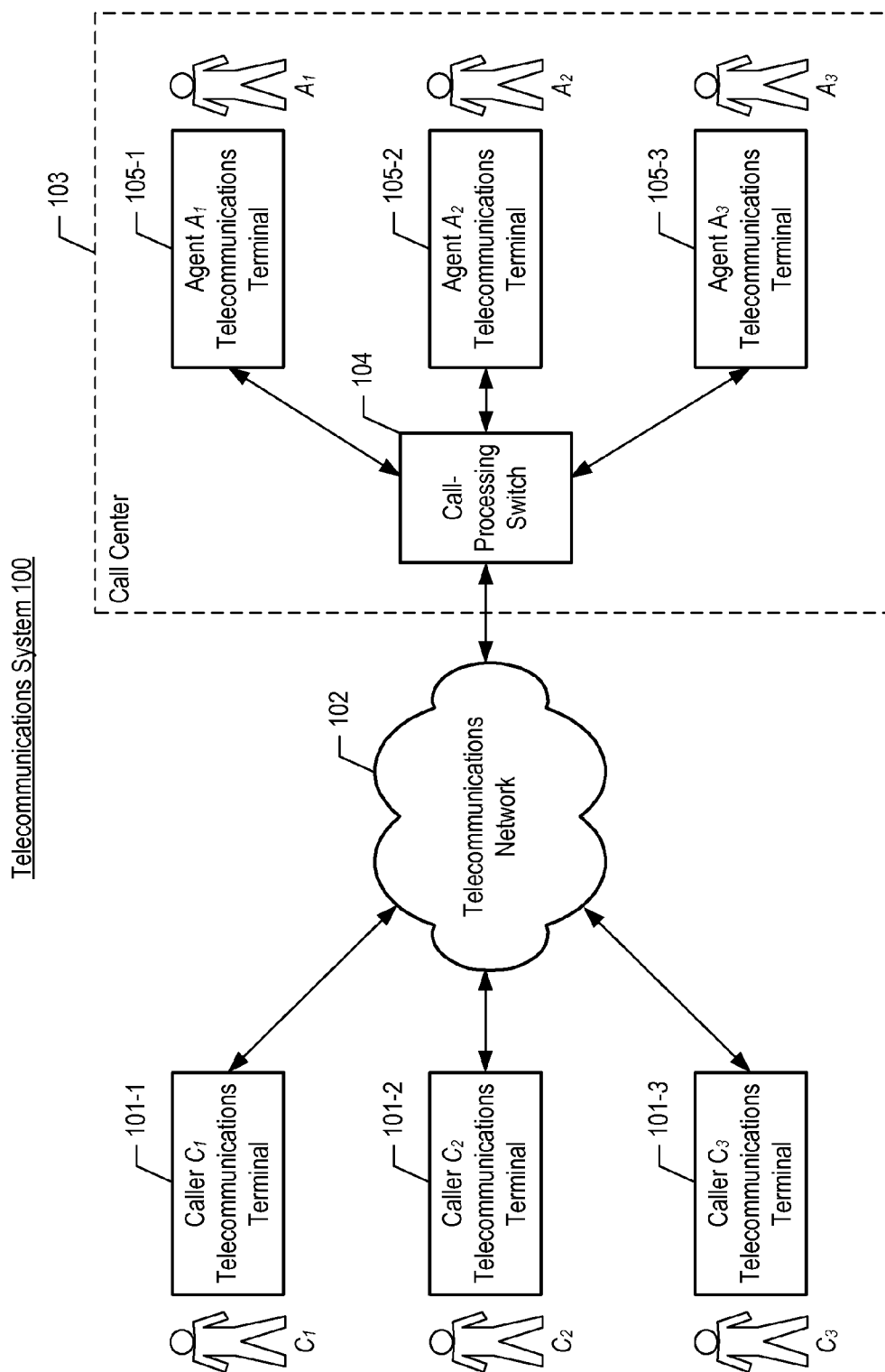


Figure 1

Figure 2

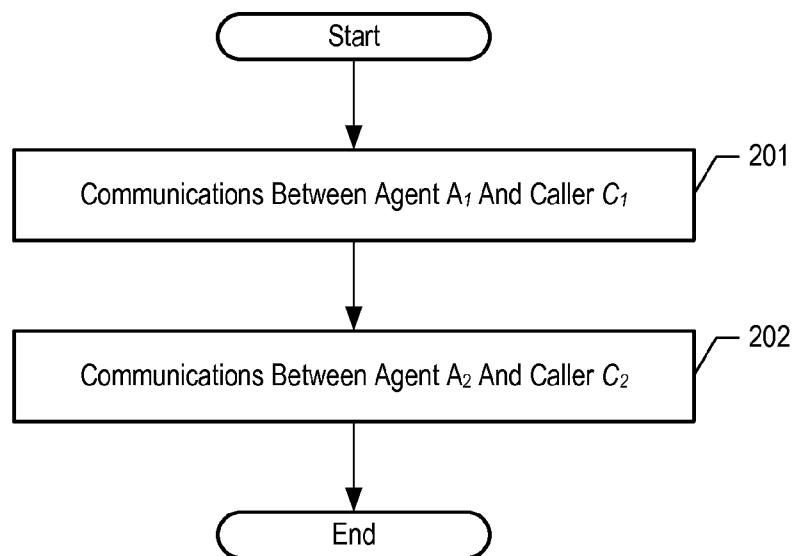


Figure 3

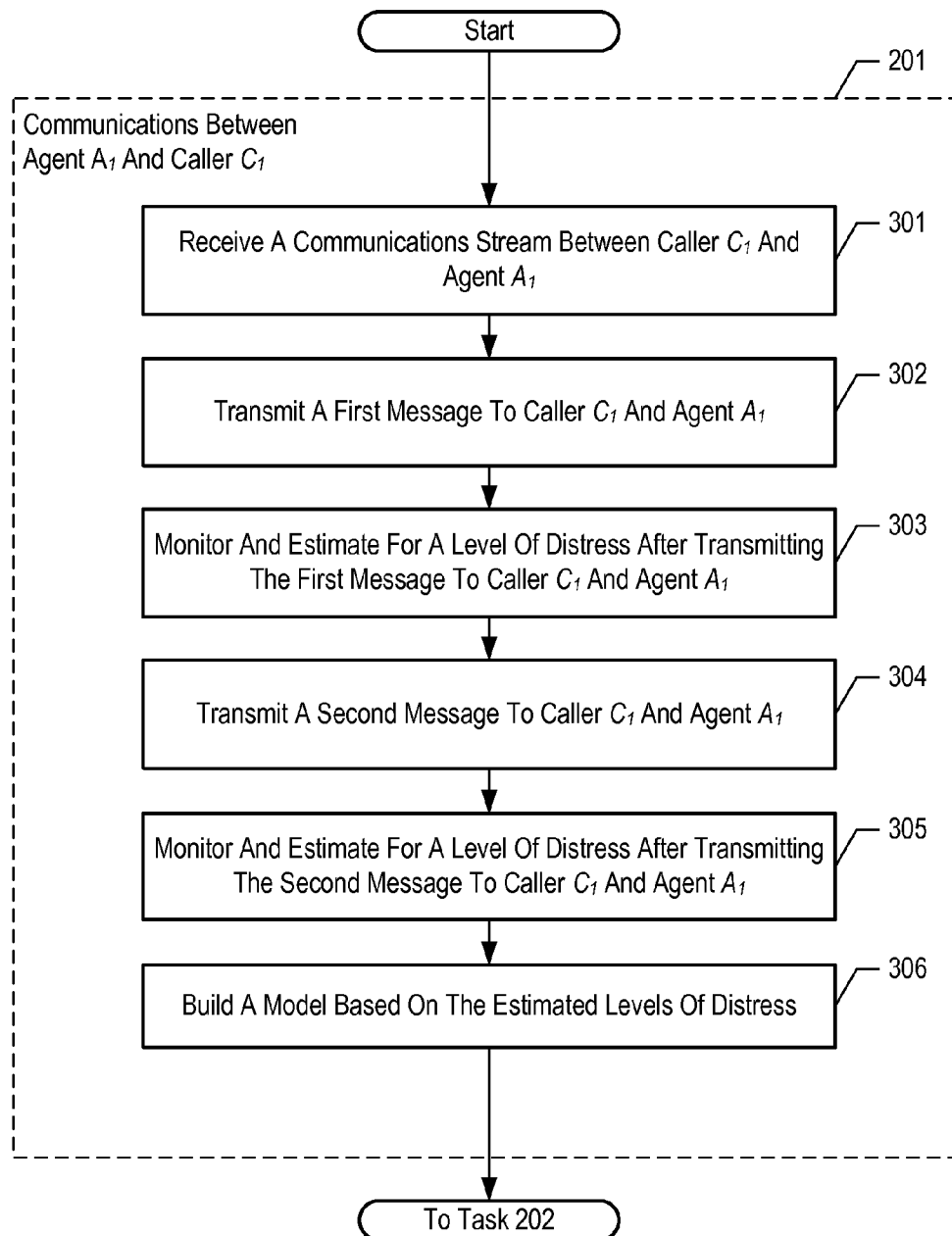


Figure 4

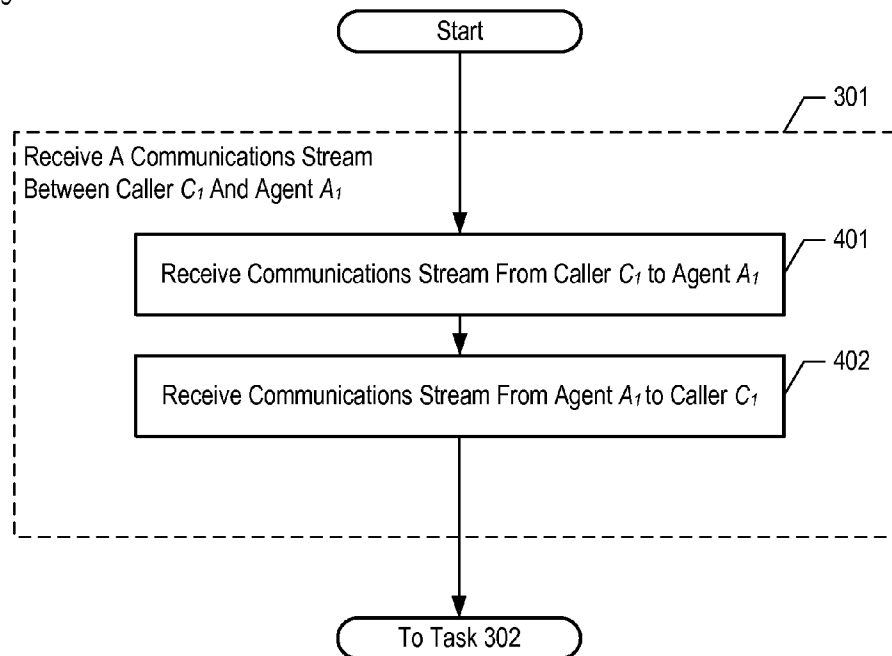


Figure 5

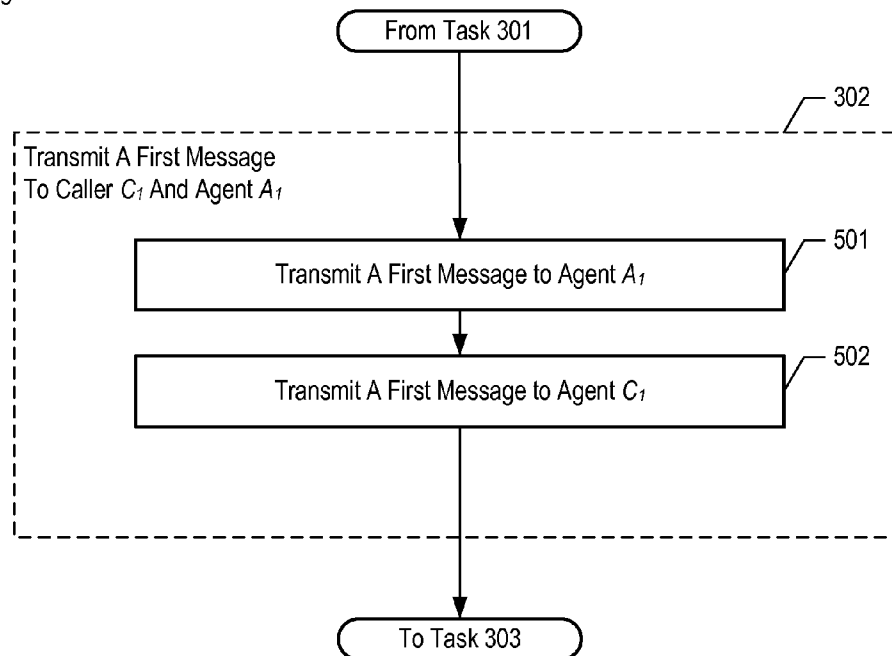


Figure 6

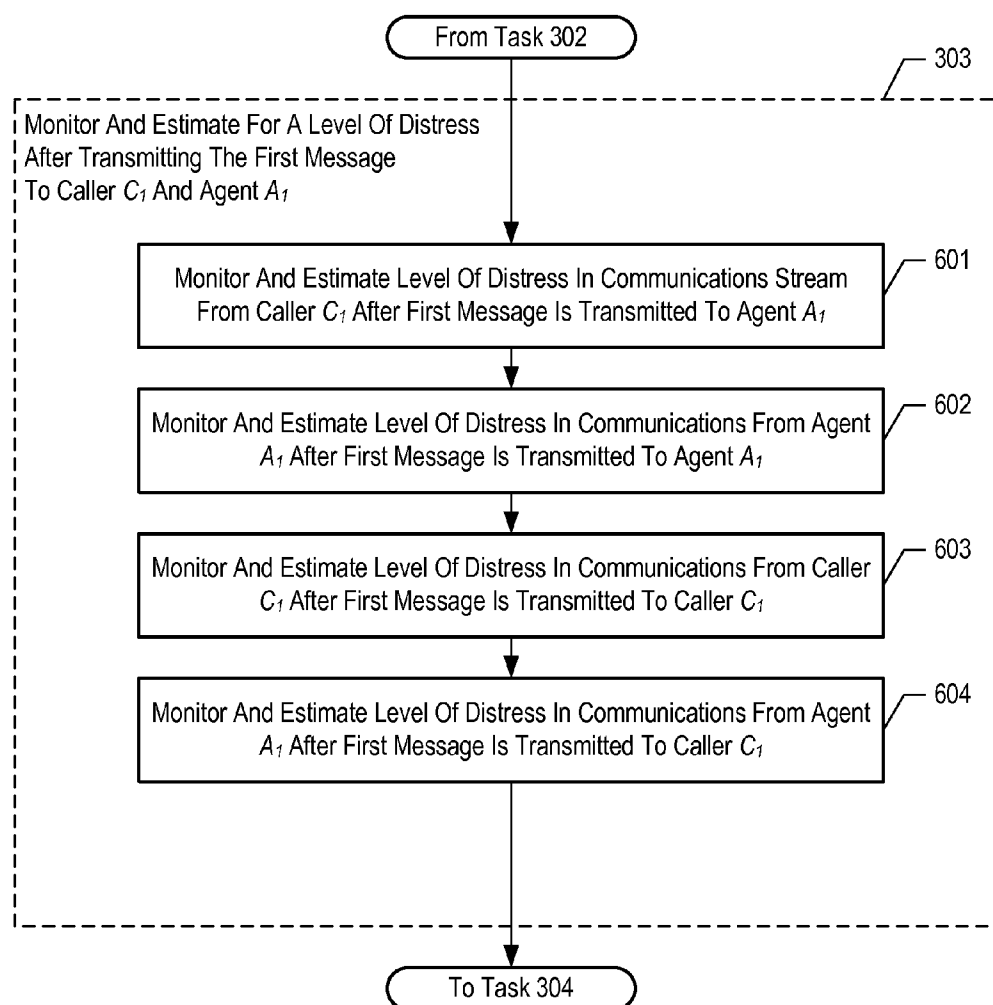


Figure 7

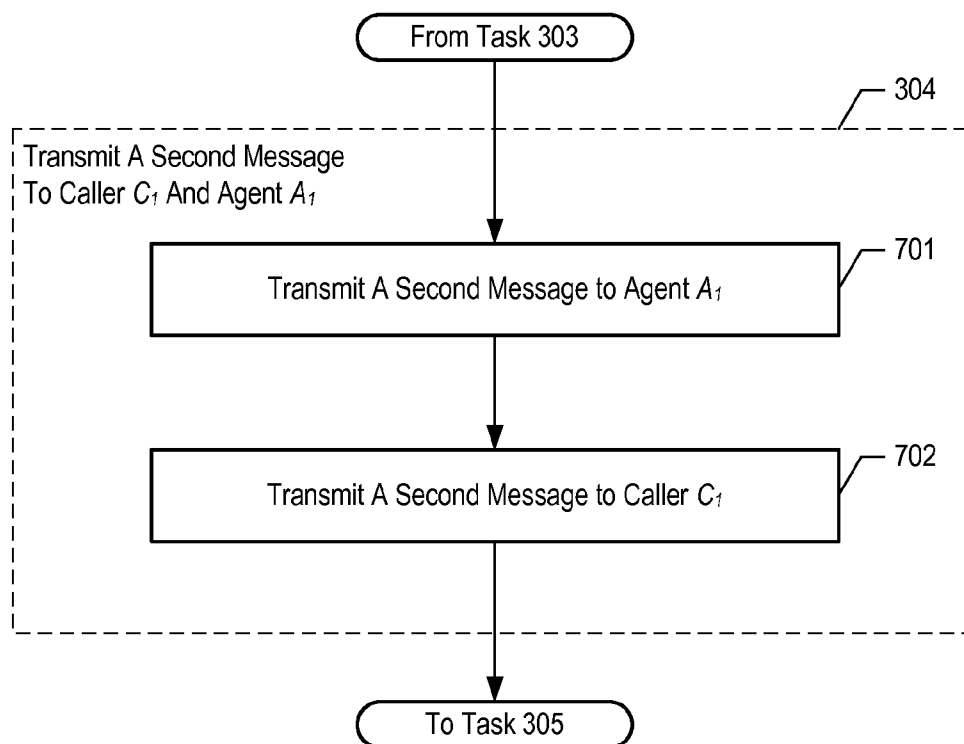


Figure 8

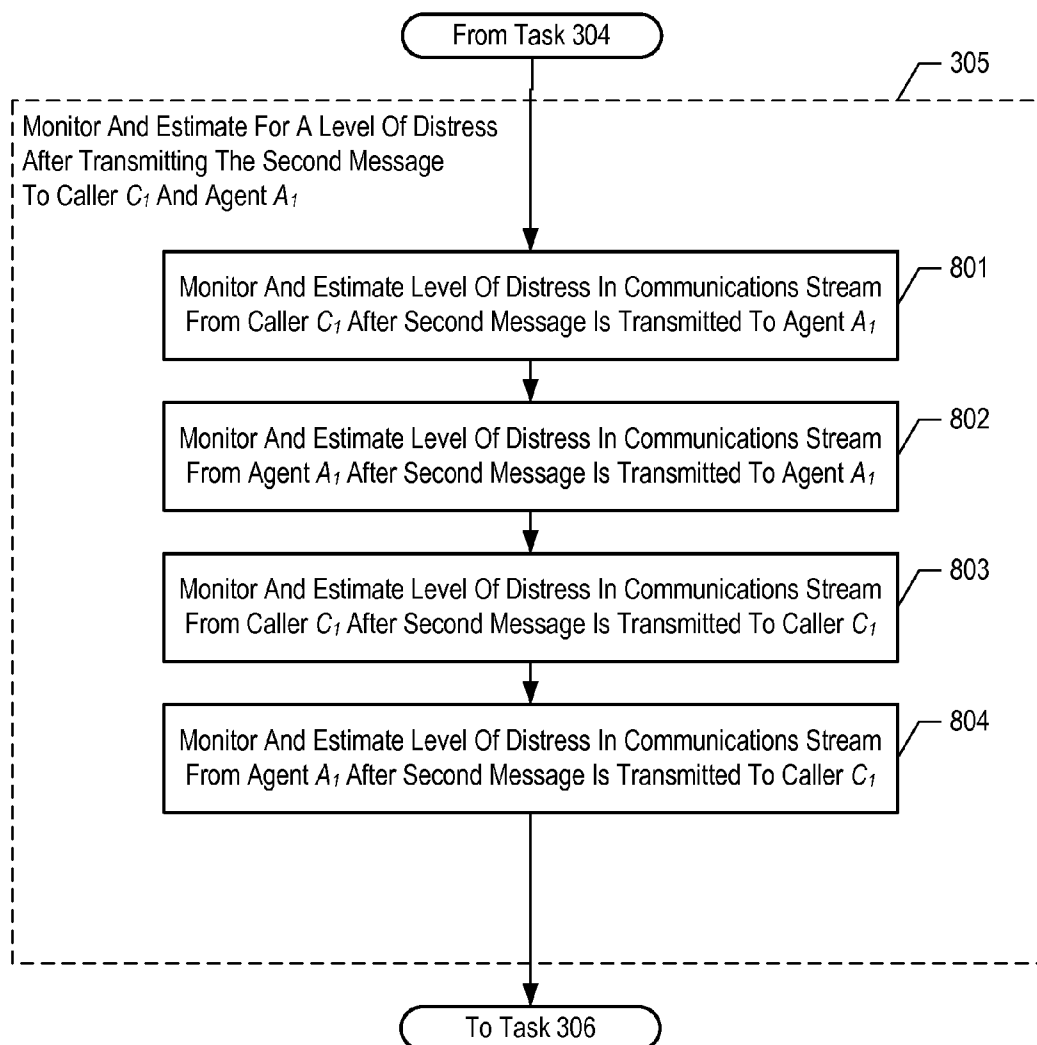
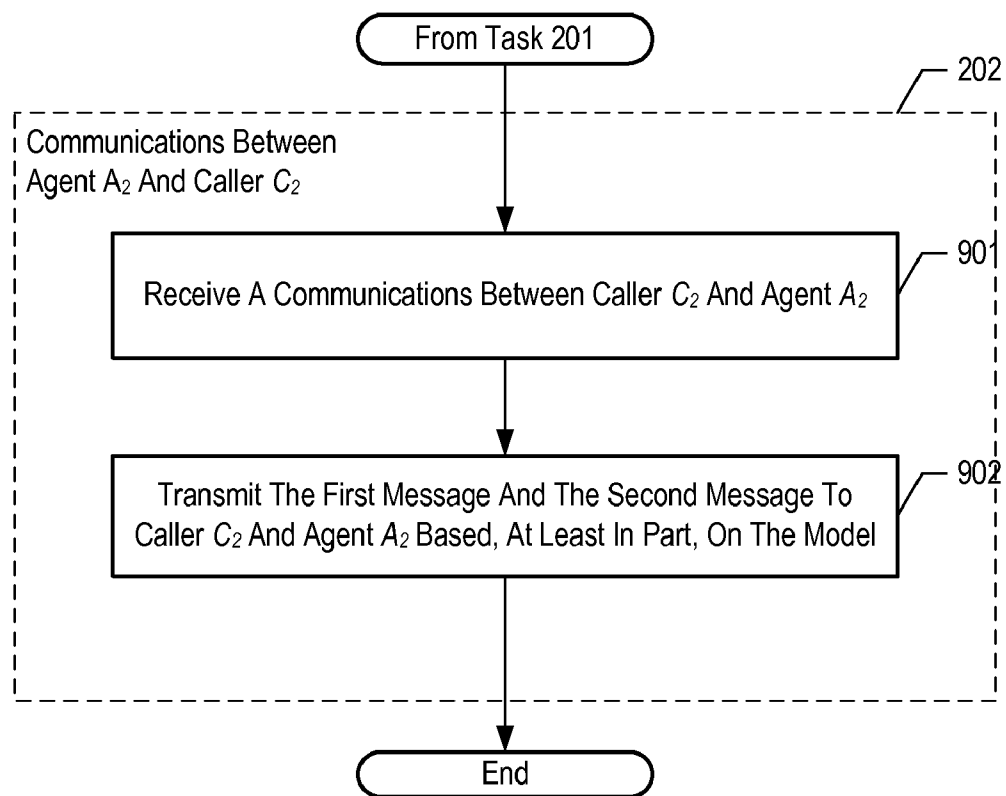


Figure 9



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ASSISTING CONTACT CENTER AGENTS AND CUSTOMERS

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to telecommunications in general, and, more particularly, to telecommunications call centers.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In many situations, when a product is purchased, the product can be too difficult for the average person to assemble, operate or troubleshoot. These problems could be resolved by contacting a call center agent for assistance.

Once the caller is connected to a call center agent, the caller is able to ask questions pertaining to their problem with the product. However, in many occasions, the call center agent must reference an electronic manual to pinpoint a solution to the problem. This situation occurs, for example, when the call center agent:

- i. does not remember the solution to the problem, or
- ii. is not familiar with the problem, or
- iii. desires to verify his/her proposed solution before presenting it to the caller, or
- iv. any combination of i, ii, and iii.

In this example, the caller becomes angry, annoyed, frustrated, etc., since he/she is being put-on-hold for an extended period of time until the call center agent is able to pinpoint the solution in the electronic manual. On the other hand, the call center agent may also become angry, annoyed, frustrated, etc., since the solution to the caller's problem is not readily apparent to the call center agent.

This poor quality-of-service may result in a loss of potential customers. Furthermore, the call center's expenses may increase due to the fact that additional training is necessary to update an agent's knowledge in a particular topic.

Therefore, there exists a need for a more accommodating call center that can assist callers with quick and reliable product information.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a call center that avoids some of the costs and disadvantages associated with call centers in the prior art.

In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, a call center receives a call from a first caller that is requesting for assistance with a product. Once the call center receives the call, a call-processing switch routes the first caller to a first agent.

Once the caller is routed to the first agent, a first message is transmitted to both the first caller's terminal and the first agent's terminal. After the first message is presented to the first caller and the first agent, the call-processing switch will monitor the communications stream for distress. During monitoring of the communications stream, the call-processing switch will estimate whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream. If it is estimated by the call-processing switch that there is distress present in the communications stream, the call-processing switch will transmit a second message to the first caller's terminal and the first agent's terminal.

After the second message is presented to the first caller and the first agent, the call-processing switch will again monitor the communications stream for distress. During monitoring

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of the communications stream, the call-processing switch will estimate whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream.

If there is no distress present in the communications stream, the call-processing switch will build a model based, at least in part, on the effectiveness of the first message and the second message in alleviating the distress of first caller and the first agent. This model will be used in future calls to assist the call-processing switch in choosing which messages to display to a caller and an agent in analogous circumstances.

When a second agent is presented with analogous circumstances with a second caller, the call-processing switch will transmit the first message and the second message to the second caller's terminal and the second agent's terminal. The messages will be transmitted in an order based, at least in part, on the first level of distress and the second level of distress.

The illustrative embodiment of the present invention comprises:

- (i) receiving a communication stream from a first caller C_1 for a first agent A_1 , (ii) transmitting a first message to the first agent A_1 , (iii) estimating a first level of distress in the first caller C_1 after the first message is presented to the first agent A_1 by analyzing the semantic content of the communication stream from the first caller C_1 to the first agent A_1 , (iv) transmitting a second message to the first agent A_1 , (v) estimating a second level of distress in the first caller C_1 after the second message is presented to the first agent A_1 by analyzing the semantic content of the communication stream from the first caller C_1 for the first agent A_1 , and (vi) transmitting the first message and the second message to a second agent A_2 in an order based, at least in part, on the first level of distress and the second level of distress.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 depicts a schematic diagram of the salient components of telecommunications systems **100** in accordance with the illustrative embodiments of the present invention.

FIG. 2 depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of the illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 3 depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **201** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 4 depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **301** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 5 depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **302** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 6 depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **304** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 7 depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **305** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 8 depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **307** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

FIG. 9 depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **202** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. 1 depicts a schematic diagram of the salient components of telecommunications systems **100** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

Telecommunications communications systems comprises: caller telecommunications terminals **101-1** through **101-3**, telecommunications network **102**, and call center **103**, which comprises call-processing switch **104**, and agent telecommunications terminals **105-1** through **105-3**, interconnected as shown.

Although the illustrative embodiment comprises three caller terminals **101-1** through **101-3**, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that comprise any number of caller terminals.

Although the illustrative embodiment comprises one telecommunications network **102**, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that comprises any number or any combination of telecommunications networks.

Although the illustrative embodiment comprises one call center **103**, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that comprises any number of call centers.

Although the illustrative embodiment comprises one call-processing switch **104**, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that comprises any number or any combination of call-processing switches.

Although the illustrative embodiment comprises three agent terminals **105-1** through **105-3**, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that comprises any number of agent terminals.

Caller C_i , wherein $i \in \{1, 2, 3\}$, is a person who desires product information from agent A_j , wherein $j \in \{1, 2, 3\}$. In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, one or more callers are able to establish voice calls with call center **103** at the same time.

Caller telecommunications terminal **101-*i***, comprises hardware and software that enables caller C_i to contact and interact with call center **103**, in well-known fashion. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which caller terminal **101-*i*** enables a user to contact call center **103** via a different modality, for example, and without limitation, web requests, e-mail, instant messaging, short-message service, video, etc.

In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, caller terminal **101-*i*** is a wireless terminal (e.g., a cell phone, a personal digital assistant, a smart-phone, etc.), but it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which some or all of the caller terminals connect to telecommunications network **102** via wireline.

Telecommunications network **102** is the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN), but it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which telecommunications network **102** is a different network or a combination of different networks, for example, and without limitation, the Internet, a private data network, a satellite network, etc.

Call center **103** is a building for housing call-processing switch **104**, agent A_j and agent terminal **105-*j***, in well-known fashion. In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, agent A_j and agent terminal **105-*j*** are co-located with call-processing switch **104** in call center **103**, but it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to

make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which some or all of the agents and agent terminals are not co-located with call-processing switch **104**.

Call-processing switch **104** comprises hardware and software for connecting caller terminal **101-*i*** to agent terminal **105-*j***, monitoring and estimating the communications stream between caller terminal **101-*i*** and agent terminal **105-*j***, transmitting one or more messages to caller terminal **101-*i*** to agent terminal **105-*j***, and building a model of the effectiveness of the one or more transmitted messages. In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, call-processing switch **104** is capable of performing the tasks described below and in the accompanying figures.

Agent terminal **105-*j*** comprises hardware and software that enables an agent to contact and interact with caller terminal **101-*i***, in well-known fashion. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which an agent A_j associated with agent terminal **105-*j*** contacts caller terminal **101-*i*** via a different modality, for example, and without limitation, e-mail, instant messaging, short-message service, video, etc.

FIG. 2 depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of the illustrative embodiment of the present invention.

At task **201**, caller C_1 contacts call center **103** via caller terminal **101-1** to obtain information about a product, in well-known fashion. Call-processing switch **104** is configured to route the call to one of the agent terminals **105-*j*** which, in accordance with the illustrative embodiment, the call is routed to agent terminal **105-1** associated with agent A_1 . At task **201**, call-processing switch **104** receives a communications stream between caller terminal **101-1** and agent terminal **105-1**. The call-processing switch **104** transmits one or more messages to caller C_1 and agent A_1 , monitors and estimates whether a distress level is present in the communications stream after transmitting the one or more messages, and builds a model based, at least in part, on the estimated levels of distress. Task **201** will be described in detail below and with respect to FIG. 3.

For the purpose of this specification, a “communications stream” could be:

- i. voice, or
- ii. text, or
- iii. data, or
- iv. video, or
- v. any combination of i, ii, iii, and iv.

For the purpose of this specification, “distress” is defined as:

- i. frustration, or
- ii. anger, or
- iii. annoyance, or
- iv. confusion, or
- v. anxiety, or
- vi. stress, or
- vii. nervousness, or
- viii. fear, or
- ix. any combination of i, ii, iii, iv, v, vi, vii, and viii.

At task **202**, caller C_2 contacts call center **103** via caller terminal **101-2** to obtain analogous information as caller C_1 . Call-processing switch **104** is configured to route the call to one of the agent terminals **105-*j*** which, in accordance with the illustrative embodiment, the call is routed to agent terminal **105-2** associated with agent A_2 . At task **202**, call-processing switch **104** receives a communications stream between caller terminal **101-2** and agent terminal **105-2** in which one or more messages are presented to the caller C_2 and agent A_2 based, at

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least in part, on the estimated levels of distress i.e., on the model. Task **202** will be described in detail below and with respect to FIG. **3**.

FIG. **3** depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **201** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to perform the tasks associated with FIG. **3** in a different order than represented or to perform one or more of the tasks concurrently. Furthermore, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that omit one or more of the tasks associated with FIG. **3**. Furthermore, all of the tasks **301**, **302**, **303**, **304**, **305** and **306** are performed by call-processing switch **104**, but it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which some or all of the tasks are performed by:

- i. caller terminals **101-i**, or
- ii. agent terminals **105-j**, or
- iii. a combination of i and ii.

At task **301**, the call-processing switch **104** receives the communications stream between caller C_1 and agent A_1 . In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, caller C_1 is contacting agent A_1 to obtain assistance with troubleshooting a product. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the caller is contacting the agent to obtain other information, for example, and without limitation, financial information, account information, etc. Task **301** will be described in detail below with respect to FIG. **4**.

At task **302**, the call-processing switch **104** transmits a first message to both caller terminal **101-1** and agent terminal **105-1**. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the first message is only transmitted to one terminal, for example, either the caller terminal or the agent terminal. Task **302** will be described in detail below with respect to FIG. **5**.

At task **303**, call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether distress is present in the communications stream between caller C_1 and agent A_1 after transmitting the first message. In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, call-processing switch **104** will monitor and estimate the communications stream by analyzing the semantic content of both the communications stream received from the caller C_1 and the agent A_1 . It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the call-processing switch **104** only monitors and estimates a level of distress of one communications stream, for example, either from the caller or the agent. Task **303** will be described in detail below with respect to FIG. **6**.

At task **304**, the call-processing switch **104** transmits a second message to caller C_1 and agent A_1 if distress is present in the communications stream after the first message is presented to the caller and the agent. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the second message is only transmitted to one terminal, for example, either the caller terminal or the agent terminal. Task **304** will be described in detail below with respect to FIG. **7**.

At task **305**, call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether distress is present in the communications stream between caller C_1 and agent A_1 after transmitting the

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second message. In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, call-processing switch **104** will monitor and estimate the communications stream by analyzing the semantic content of both the communications stream received from the caller C_1 and the agent A_1 . It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the call-processing switch **104** only monitors and estimates a level of distress of one communications stream, for example, either from the caller or the agent. Task **305** will be described in detail below with respect to FIG. **8**.

At task **308**, the call-processing switch **104** builds a model of the effectiveness of the first message and the second message in alleviating the distress of caller C_1 and agent A_1 . This model will be used in future calls to assist call-processing switch **104** in choosing which messages to display to a caller and an agent in analogous circumstances. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the model is based on one or more estimated levels of distress.

FIG. **4** depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **301** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to perform the tasks associated with FIG. **4** in a different order than represented or to perform one or more of the tasks concurrently. Furthermore, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that omit one or more of the tasks associated with FIG. **4**.

At task **401**, the call-processing switch **104** receives communications signals from caller C_1 to agent A_1 . In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, the communications stream received from caller C_1 to agent A_1 are in the form of audio signals.

At task **402**, the call-processing switch **104** receives communications signals from agent A_1 to caller C_1 . In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, the communications stream received from agent A_1 to caller C_1 are also in the form of audio signals.

It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the communications stream received by call-processing switch **104** could be in the form of:

- i. voice, or
- ii. text, or
- iii. data, or
- iv. video, or
- v. any combination of i, ii, iii, and iv.

Furthermore, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the present invention omits one of the task **401** and **402**.

FIG. **5** depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **302** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to perform the tasks associated with FIG. **5** in a different order than represented or to perform one or more of the tasks concurrently. Furthermore, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that omit one or more of the tasks associated with FIG. **5**.

At task **501** and **502**, the call-processing switch **104** transmits a first message to agent A_1 and caller C_1 . In accordance

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with the illustrative embodiment, call-processing switch **104** selects the first message from a plurality of messages based, at least in part, on:

- i. a model of the likelihood that each of the plurality of messages will assist caller C_p , or
- ii. an analysis of the communications stream, or
- iii. any combination of i and ii.

It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the first message is transmitted only to one terminal, for example, either the caller terminal or the agent terminal.

Furthermore, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the invention in which the first message is presented to the caller and agent, for example, and without limitation, via a user interface, e-mail, voice, etc.

FIG. **6** depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **303** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to perform the tasks associated with FIG. **6** in a different order than represented or to perform one or more of the tasks concurrently. Furthermore, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that omit one or more of the tasks associated with FIG. **6**.

At task **601**, the call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream from caller C_1 after the first message is presented to agent A_1 . In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, the call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether a level of distress is present by analyzing the semantic contents of the communications stream, for example, and without limitation, monitoring and estimating the acoustic features of the communications stream from caller C_1 . These acoustic features include, but are not limited to:

- i. the choice of words and phrases in the communication stream, or
- ii. the temporal ratio of speaking to silence in the communications stream, or
- iii. the phonetic emphasis on words and phrases in the communications stream, or
- iv. the temporal rate of speech, and its temporal derivatives, in the communications stream, or
- v. the tone (e.g., level of formality, informality, sarcasm, etc.) of speech in the communications speech, or
- vi. any combination of i, ii, iii, iv, and v.

It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the call-processing switch **104** is configured to monitor and estimate whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream by analyzing:

- i. text (e.g., capitalizing all the letters in an instant message or e-mail, punctuation marks, etc.), or
- ii. facial expressions (e.g., lowering of the eyebrows during a video conference, etc.), or
- iii. gesticulations, (e.g., slamming his/her hand on the table, etc.) or
- iv. voice, (providing more emphasis on a word, phrase or sentence during a voice conference, etc.) or
- v. any combination of i, ii, iii, and iv.

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At task **602**, the call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream from agent A_1 after the first message is presented to agent A_1 .

At task **603**, the call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream from caller C_1 after the first message is presented to caller C_1 .

At task **604**, the call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream from agent A_1 after the first message is presented to caller C_1 .

It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which call-processing switch **104** only performs some of the tasks associated with FIG. **6**.

FIG. **7** depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **304** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to perform the tasks associated with FIG. **7** in a different order than represented or to perform one or more of the tasks concurrently. Furthermore, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that omit one or more of the tasks associated with FIG. **7**.

In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, the call-processing switch **104** estimated that there is a level of distress present in the communications stream after transmitting the first message to the caller and the agent.

At task **701** and **702**, the call-processing switch **104** transmits a second message to agent A_1 and caller C_1 . In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, call-processing switch **104** selects the second message from a plurality of messages based, at least in part, on:

- i. a model of the likelihood that each of the plurality of messages will assist caller C_p , or
- ii. an analysis of the communications stream, or
- iii. any combination of i and ii.

It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the second message is transmitted only to one terminal, for example, the caller terminal or the agent terminal.

Furthermore, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the invention in which the second message is presented to the caller and agent, for example, and without limitation, via a user interface, e-mail, voice, etc.

FIG. **8** depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **305** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to perform the tasks associated with FIG. **8** in a different order than represented or to perform one or more of the tasks concurrently. Furthermore, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that omit one or more of the tasks associated with FIG. **8**.

At task **801**, the call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream from caller C_1 after the second message is transmitted to agent A_1 . In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, the call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether distress is present by analyzing the semantic contents of the communications stream, for example, and without limitation, monitoring and estimating the acoustic

features of the communications stream from caller C_1 . These acoustic features include, but are not limited to:

- i. the choice of words and phrases in the communication stream, or
- ii. the temporal ratio of speaking to silence in the communications stream, or
- iii. the phonetic emphasis on words and phrases in the communications stream, or
- iv. the temporal rate of speech, and its temporal derivatives, in the communications stream, or
- v. the tone (e.g., level of formality, informality, sarcasm, etc.) of speech in the communications speech, or
- vi. any combination of i, ii, iii, iv, and v.

It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which the call-processing switch **104** is configured to monitor and estimate whether distress is present in the communications stream by analyzing:

- i. text (e.g., capitalizing all the letters in an instant message or e-mail, punctuation marks, etc.), or
- ii. facial expressions (e.g., lowering of the eyebrows during a video conference, etc.), or
- iii. gesticulations, (e.g., slamming his/her hand on the table, etc.) or
- iv. voice, (providing more emphasis on a word, phrase or sentence during a voice conference, etc.) or
- v. any combination of i, ii, iii, and iv.

At task **802**, the call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream from agent A_1 after the second message is presented to agent A_1 .

At task **803**, the call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream from caller C_1 after the second message is presented to caller C_1 .

At task **804**, the call-processing switch **104** monitors and estimates whether a level of distress is present in the communications stream from agent A_1 after the second message is presented to caller C_1 .

It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention in which call-processing switch **104** only performs some of the tasks associated with FIG. **9**.

FIG. **9** depicts a flowchart of the salient tasks associated with the operation of task **202** in accordance with the illustrative embodiment of the present invention. It will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to perform the tasks associated with FIG. **9** in a different order than represented or to perform one or more of the tasks concurrently. Furthermore, it will be clear to those skilled in the art, after reading this disclosure, how to make and use alternative embodiments of the present invention that omit one or more of the tasks associated with FIG. **9**.

At task **901**, the call-processing switch **104** receives a communications stream between caller C_2 and agent A_2 . In accordance with the illustrative embodiment, agent A_2 is presented with analogous circumstances as agent A_1 .

At task **902**, the call-processing switch **104** will transmit the first message and the second message to agent A_2 in an order based, at least in part, on the first level of distress and the second level of distress, i.e., the model based on the estimated levels of distress at task **306**.

It is to be understood that the disclosure teaches just one example of the illustrative embodiment and that many variations of the invention can easily be devised by those skilled in the art after reading this disclosure and that the scope of the present invention is to be determined by the following claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A method comprising:

receiving a communication stream from a first caller C_1 for a first agent A_1 ;
transmitting a first message to the first agent A_1 ;
estimating a first level of distress in the first caller C_1 after the first message is presented to the first agent A_1 by analyzing the semantic content of the communication stream from the first caller C_1 to the first agent A_1 ;
transmitting a second message to the first agent A_1 ;
estimating a second level of distress in the first caller C_1 after the second message is presented to the first agent A_1 by analyzing the semantic content of the communication stream from the first caller C_1 for the first agent A_1 ; and
transmitting the first message and the second message to a second agent A_2 in an order based, at least in part, on the first level of distress and the second level of distress.

2. The method of claim **1** wherein the order is also based, at least in part, on the semantic content of the communication stream from the first caller C_1 for the first agent A_1 .

3. The method of claim **1** further comprising:

receiving a communication stream from the first agent A_1 to the first caller C_1 ;
estimating a third level of distress in the first agent A_1 after the first message is presented to the first agent A_1 by analyzing the semantic content of the communication stream from the first agent A_1 to the first caller C_1 ;
estimating a fourth level of distress in the first agent A_1 after the second message is presented to first agent A_1 by analyzing the semantic content of the communication stream from the first agent A_1 to the first caller C_1 ; and
wherein the order is also based, at least in part, on the third level of distress and the fourth level of distress.

4. The method of claim **3** wherein the order is also based, at least in part, on the semantic content of the communication stream from the first agent A_1 to the first caller C_1 .

5. The method of claim **1** further comprising:

transmitting the first message to the first caller C_1 ;
estimating a third level of distress in the first caller C_1 after the first message is presented to the first caller C_1 by analyzing the semantic content of the communication stream from the first caller C_1 for the first agent A_1 ;
transmitting the second message to the first caller C_1 ; and
estimating a fourth level of distress in the first agent A_1 after the second message is presented to the first caller C_1 by analyzing the semantic content of the communication stream from the first caller C_1 for the first agent A_1 ;
wherein the order is also based on the third level of distress and the fourth level of distress.

6. A method comprising:

receiving a communication stream from agent A_1 to caller C_1 ;
transmitting a first message to agent A_1 ;
estimating a first level of distress in the communication stream from agent A_1 after the first message is presented to agent A_1 ;
transmitting a second message to agent A_1 ;
estimating a second level of distress in the communication stream from agent A_1 after the second message is presented to agent A_1 ;
transmitting the first message and the second message to agent A_2 in an order based, at least in part, on the first level of distress and the second level of distress.

7. The method of claim **6** wherein the order is also based on keywords in a communication stream from agent A_1 to caller C_1 .

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8. The method of claim 6 further comprising:
 receiving a communication stream from caller C_1 for agent A_1 ;
 estimating a third level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the first message is presented
 to agent A_1 ;
 estimating a fourth level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the second message is pre-
 sented to agent A_1 ;
 wherein the order is also based on the third level of distress
 and the fourth level of distress.

9. The method of claim 8 wherein the order is also based on
 keywords in a communication stream from caller C_1 for agent
 A_1 .

10. The method of claim 6 further comprising:
 transmitting a first message to caller C_1 ;
 estimating a third level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the first message is presented
 to caller C_1 ;
 transmitting a second message to caller C_1 ;
 estimating a fourth level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the second message is pre-
 sented to caller C_1 ;
 wherein the order is also based on the third level of distress
 and the fourth level of distress.

11. A method comprising:
 receiving a communication stream from caller C_1 for agent
 A_1 ;
 transmitting a first message to caller C_1 ;
 estimating a first level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the first message is presented
 to caller C_1 ;
 transmitting a second message to caller C_1 ;
 estimating a second level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the second message is pre-
 sented to caller C_1 ;
 transmitting the first message and the second message to
 agent A_2 in an order based, at least in part, on the first
 level of distress and the second level of distress.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein the order is also based
 on keywords in a communication stream from caller C_1 for
 agent A_1 .

13. The method of claim 11 further comprising:
 receiving a communication stream from agent A_1 to caller
 C_1 ;
 estimating a third level of distress in the communication
 stream from agent A_1 after the first message is presented
 to caller C_1 ;
 estimating a fourth level of distress in the communication
 stream from agent A_1 after the second message is pre-
 sented to caller C_1 ;
 wherein the order is also based on the third level of distress
 and the fourth level of distress.

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14. The method of claim 13 wherein the order is also based
 on keywords in a communication stream from agent A_1 to
 caller C_1 .

15. The method of claim 11 further comprising:
 transmitting a first message to agent A_1 ;
 estimating a third level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the first message is presented
 to agent A_1 ;
 transmitting a second message to agent A_1 ;
 estimating a fourth level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the second message is pre-
 sented to agent A_1 ;
 wherein the order is also based on the third level of distress
 and the fourth level of distress.

16. A method comprising:
 receiving a communication stream from agent A_1 to caller
 C_1 ;
 transmitting a first message to caller C_1 ;
 estimating a first level of distress in the communication
 stream from agent A_1 after the first message is presented
 to caller C_1 ;
 transmitting a second message to caller C_1 ;
 estimating a second level of distress in the communication
 stream from agent A_1 after the second message is pre-
 sented to caller C_1 ;
 transmitting the first message and the second message to
 agent A_2 in an order based, at least in part, on the first
 level of distress and the second level of distress.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the order is also based
 on keywords in a communication stream from agent A_1 to
 caller C_1 .

18. The method of claim 16 further comprising:
 receiving a communication stream from caller C_1 for agent
 A_1 ;
 estimating a third level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the first message is presented
 to caller C_1 ;
 estimating a fourth level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the second message is pre-
 sented to caller C_1 ;
 wherein the order is also based on the third level of distress
 and the fourth level of distress.

19. The method of claim 18 wherein the order is also based
 on keywords in a communication stream from caller C_1 for
 agent A_1 .

20. The method of claim 16 further comprising:
 transmitting a first message to agent A_1 ;
 estimating a third level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the first message is presented
 to agent A_1 ;
 transmitting a second message to agent A_1 ;
 estimating a fourth level of distress in the communication
 stream from caller C_1 after the second message is pre-
 sented to agent A_1 ;
 wherein the order is also based on the third level of distress
 and the fourth level of distress.

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